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ST-REPORT 6 August 29, 1987 From Zmagazine Information Network

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ZMAG OVERSEAS NEWSWIRE . . . Excerpts from Lennart Ollsson . . .

EasyPlex Date: 25-Aug-87 23:30 EDT From: Lennart Olsson Subj: Hello Again!

Hello Ron!

Long time since you heard from me? I think it's a little too long...

I now know where and when I will go to the U.S. The seminar will be in Dallas, Texas. We will travel there via New York. We'll change plane there 13 and 17 september. I can give you more details if you want.....

I got a glance at the Mega 4 ST and the laser printer last week. Seemed rather nice. However, no laser printer drivers were available yet...Atari Corp. Scandinavia will set up a meeting this fall with all user group officials, sysops, etc. A brand new ST user group was formed in Stockholm during the summer. I don't know anything more about it yet. Atari Corp. Scandinavia is planning to set up an own BBS this fall.

Ok, that's it for this time. Perhaps we could meet in N.Y?

Have a nice time! Lennart

## TOS ROMS -- BLITTER VERSION

The 1987 revision of TOS is scheduled for release in conjunction with the new "blitter" chip. The new TOS has been upgraded to include support for the hardware blit as well as retaining the software blit functions for full compatibility with older software which relies on hardware timing (a definite no-no).

Changes in the new ROMs are:

RS232: The RS232 handler has been completely rewritten. RTS/CTS handshaking now works. Baud rates 50 and 75 now work.

CLOCK: Support is now included for the Mega ST's built-in, battery-backer-up realtime clock. The realtime clock is automatically used by the XBIOS\_gettime and settime functions for the IKBD. The GEMDO\$ clock is reset from the realtime clock at the termination of every program.

STARTUP: Memory clear at system startup is much faster, improving performance on multi-megabyte systems.

DESKTOP: The desktop now includes a control for deactivating/activating the blitter chip. Also, the Save Desktop and Print Screen selections will request confirmation. Spurious characters are no longer written to the DESKTOP.INF file. Doing a PRINT or SHOW from the desktop will now display characters with ASCII codes above 127. SHOW and PRINT use a larger buffer now. Single drive copies now require fewer disk swaps.

CART: Cartridge handling has been revised, eliminating the need for "CARTSTART" code and allowing .TOS and .TTP programs. Lower case letters will now be accepted and passed to an application from the "Open Application ... Parameter" box.

AES: The AES will now send repeat clicks if the mouse button is held down on the arrow or page controls of a window, which lets a window smooth scroll. The AES underscore bug is now fixed. APPL\_TPLAY and APPL\_TRECORD now work. The limit of 30 characters on a line in an alert box is now rigidly enforced.

MOUSE: The mouse redraw can now be set to XOR mode. The system will return after a single click if this is what was requested.

DMA: The DMA bus can now have more than one device attached at powerup time, without any special software.

FLOPPY: The floppy read/write code checks for more errors now. In prior versions, the system would not report a CRC error under certain circumstances; now it will. This hurts some copy protection schemes. The format of the floppy disk has been skewed from track to track to improve disk speed; the XBIOS supports this by using -1 for the skew value and placing a pointer to a one word per sector skew table in the previously unused longword.

VDI: The VDI will now draw arcs with small angles.

BIOS: Character out routines are much faster.

BLITTER: Automatic blitter chip support is included in line-A and VDI calls. The extended inquire will report a larger performance factor than before, allowing applications to check for the presence of the blitter. A new XBIOS call has been added to check for the blitter and to activate or deactivate it. The blit is not reentrant -- line-A and VDI should not be called from within an interrupt.

REGISTER: The registers D0, D1, D2, A0, A1, A2 have always been forfeit when a trap call was made. Now the demise of these occurs under more conditions than before.

MEMORY: Slightly more RAM is used by the system. Programs that were close to the edge on a 520ST may no longer fit.

VARIABLE: Most undocumented system variables have been moved. You were warned!

NOTES AND WARNINGS:

1. Some programs depend on the OS always being at \$FC0000. This is \*not\* cast in stone and will probably change soon. To find the OS header, use the pointer "sysbase" as documented.
2. The 4 megabyte ST puts the screen near the end of accessible RAM. Sloppy programs that have been writing past the end of the screen will give bus errors if they do so on the 4 meg ST.

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ST REALTIME CONFRENCE OF 8/19/87 DBASIC, WITH DTACK GROUNDED  
C) COPYRIGHT 1987 by ATARI CORPORATION AND THE ST ROUNDTABLE ON GENIE.  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. MAY BE REPRODUCED ONLY WITH THIS NOTICE INTACT.

To sign up for GENie, call (with modem) 800-638-8369. Type HHH, and wait for the prompt U#=. Type XJM11877,GENie.

<[Neil] NHARRIS> Hello everyone. It's time to start tonight's formal conference session. Our guest tonight is Hal Hardenbergh (hope I spelled that right!) from DTACK. James Shaker may be at the terminal there, too.

<[Hal] DTACK> Hi, folks! Yes, James is standing by explaining how this stuff works.

<[Neil] NHARRIS> Hal, tell us about Dtack Grounded, OK?

<[Hal] DTACK> DTACK GROUNDED is a name taken from a line of hardware, 68000 based, made by digital Acoustics for about 5 years. DTACK is pin 10, if you ground it, the 68000 runs at maximum speed.

<[Neil] NHARRIS> Digital Acoustics was your last company before this one, and if you were playing with 68000's 5 years ago, you're something of a pioneer. Mind telling us about your background in the industry?

<[Hal] DTACK> Yes. We were a hardware company from 1981 to Jan of this year. In 1981 we introduced the first 68000-based hardware product for the personal computer industry. It was an attached processor for the big PETs and the Apple

II. I understand that a company named Atari is now looking at similar products based on the 68020 for the ST!

<[Neil] NHARRIS> How did you first get into computers?

<[Hal] DTACK> I was an electrical engineer involved in making test equipment for inertial guidance systems. I bought a Wang 500 desktop computer in 1969, repeat, 1969. In 1972 I had, at home, a personal computer with BASIC in ROM, a CRT, and dual digital tape drives (that was before floppies!).

<[Neil] NHARRIS> So you remember the "good" old days of computers. And you got into micros right from the start, too. Did this have an influence on the design of DBASIC?

<[Hal] DTACK> Yes. The early personal computers had very slow CPUs compared to the 68000. You had to work those CPUs as hard as you could. DBASIC does exactly the same thing to the 68000, and that's why DBASIC is so bloody fast!!

<[Neill] NHARRIS> I guess that's why using DBASIC reminds me of using a Commodore PET circa 1978, except, of course, for the speed. I'll let the rest of the folks ask you more about the design of DBASIC. One more thing before we start taking questions. You seem to have some unique ideas about how to market DBASIC, want to talk about that a little? How do people get their hands on DBASIC, and how do you expect to make your money from it?

<[Hal] DTACK> I don't think ANY BASIC is worth a damn unless lots of people use it. By giving away 4,900 manuals, we wanted to have an 'instant installed base'. We are giving away LOTS of free copyrighted labels, so folks can share the DBASIC system disk without pirating it. Go to a user group, or one of the 160 stores we've seeded, or send a blank disk and a stamped mailer to ST WORLD DTACK OFFER - 1385 Cleveland Loop Drive - Roseburg OR 97470 and they'll send you the system disk. How's that for a deal? We plan to make money selling the manual and the latest version of the disk for \$43 by phone (505) 989 9576.

<[Neill] NHARRIS> We have some hands raised, so I'll open up the floor now.

<[John] JRWRIGHT> Ok... Is DBASIC more like the structured BASIC's or the "STREET" Basics?

<[Hal] DTACK> The 'street' BASICs, I guess. Actually, it's a lot like the BASICs on the old PETs and Apples.

<[John] JRWRIGHT> Thanks.

<[Julius] J.OKLAMCAK> Hal, why the single-mindedness <grin> in avoiding TOS (GEMDOS) as the underlying OS for DBASIC? I would have prefered the raw speed with some compatibility with existing file systems.

<[Hal] DTACK> DBASIC is an all-out, no-compromise effort to get the fastest possible interactive BASIC consistent with accurate FP math. Repeat, all-out, NO-compromise.

<[Mark] SUPRATECH> I have 2 questions: 1) I do not see how you are handling bad sectors on the floppy and 2) Does it look like you will be able to use the hard disk?

<[Hal] DTACK> On the extremely rare occasions that we encounter a bad sector (once so far), we throw away the diskette. We do not support hard disks now or next week. In six months?

<[Mark] SUPRATECH> Hummm....The reason I ask is that I had a bad sectored floppy and using the diskdup the system used the disk, thus some of the programs would not run.

<[Hal] DTACK> If you got a bad disk, it won't run all right. Maybe the reason we have so few bad ones (James 1, me 0) is that we only put 5 sectors on a track instead of 9 <smile>.

<[Neill] NHARRIS> 5 sectors that are twice the size of TOS sectors, right?

<[Hal] DTACK> Right.

<GRIFJOHN> I wonder why you guys chose to circumvent TOS & GEM, some of us (most) like GEM.

<[Hal] DTACK> Like I said, no compromise. TOS is at least twice as slow as our DOS, and GEM has some nice features - SLOOOOW nice features.

<GRIFJOHN> Interesting non-compatible idea..

<SRMC> Hi hal, Steve McIntosh here. Two quick questions - Any comeback for FNE, and any ideas for the mega's slot??? - done.

<[Hal] DTACK> Hi, Steve. No comeback for FNE. The slot is interesting.

<[Neil] NHARRIS> What is FNE?

<[Hal] DTACK> Felgercarb Naysayer Eloï used to write a newsletter, like 1200 pages in 5 1/2 years, that we mailed out

<[Neil] NHARRIS> Aha, I remember the newsletter well. Interesting stuff if you ever decide to get out of the technical side you have a future as a writer <grin> The line of raised hands is short, if others have questions.

<[Julius] J.OKLAMCAK> Ok, here comes a question or two. Hal, a lot of people are in the impression that DBASIC is an interpreter, when in fact, it is a incremental compiler. Could you tell us how this differs from the traditional methods?

<[Hal] DTACK> An incremental compiler has the advantages of interactivity but without the hassles. Most folks think all interactive languages are interpreters, but that's not so. Incremental compilers, like compilers, run LOTS faster than interpreters. But, you can't have global optimization in an incremental compiler, so a good compiler should be a tad faster than an incremental compiler, but ONLY a tad faster for real-world programs.

<[Neil] NHARRIS> The difference between incremental compiling and tokenizing is?

<[Hal] DTACK> Tokenizing is partway to incremental compiling, although most folks call tokenizing BASICs such as the old PET and APPLE BASICs interpreters.

Tokenizing BASICs still interpret FP constants each time they are encountered; our DBASIC already has them converted to binary (for instance). Also, variables are already converted to address offsets.

<[Neil] NHARRIS> What features do you plan to add to DBASIC in the future, Hal?

<[Hal] DTACK> Right now, we're working on demo and applications programs. In a year, undoubtably boolean functions and parameter passing but it took us a year to do the 288-page manual, and we haven't started on the next manual yet.

<[Neil] NHARRIS> I guess that just about wraps it up. Hal, anything you want to say before we open up the floor to informal conversation?

<[Hal] DTACK> Yes. In about a week we'll have a DTACK BBS for support and for downloading demo programs. It's not on the air now, but the number will be (505) 989-9578.

<[Neill] NHARRIS> Great! And there's a DBASIC topic in CAT 3 here as well. Hal and James, thanks very much for joining us here this evening.

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PRODUCT REVIEW      Datatrieve by: Bill Silverman

CAPITOL DISTRICT ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS AUGUST 1987 NEWSLETTER  
P O BOX 511 DELMAR NEW YORK 12054 CDACE BBS (518) 237-1232

The search for good reliable serious software has had it's ups and downs in the years that Atari has been making computers. The Atari 800 VisiCalc was not a complete implementation of that old standby and it was not until the release of Syn Calc that any Atari computer had a viable full featured serious software product.

I am happy to say that Datatrieve from Abacus Software is another fine addition to serious software for Atari computers - specifically the ST.

Datatrieve is not a relational database. It is, in fact something of a relational database in reverse. In essence you design a large database and then create custom report and screen formats to view those fields you wish to see. With some programs designing screen 'masks' and report formats require extensive knowledge of the program and perhaps a dash or two of macro mania, thankfully Datatrieve is an intelligent implementation of GEM allowing construction and selection fields, screens, reports, lists, labels, and even full form letters with either icons or menus that are mouse selected or keystroke commands. You can create some really fascinating formats for either screen or paper with Datatrieve with very little effort and little reading of the manual.

The program is basically a super index card filer which you can enter through any custom designed door (screen or report) you like. Having used this program since last January to keep track of 1100 children in a soccer club it's strengths and weaknesses have become apparent. Without a doubt the strong points of this program make it's drawbacks almost meaningless.

From that perspective we'll take those weak points first:

- \* you cannot move all types of data freely from one drive path to another. Some you can some can't. Worse, the manual doesn't tell you what is allowed to be moved and what is not. Learning what moves from a pathway and what does not is strictly a trial and error experience.
- \* the program does not remember where it goes for some types of files and does for some others. Therefore, a disproportionate share of the time you spend transporting subfiles or records from one file to another is spent with a mouse 'reminding' Datatrieve where you want the data to go. (On the other hand it does this flawlessly)

- \* there is a DIF option that is somewhat misleading. In reality it is really a mail merge option where you can customize field and record delimiters to match up to the requirements of your word processor. (On the other hand it is a great feature, Datatrieve and ST Writer are the equal of some software packages that cost over \$300 and they cost under \$40.00 combined)
- \* you have the option of selecting fields you want to use when transporting to and from files. When you save this field selection it becomes the default standard for all future data transfers. (But you are always asked if you want to save field selections and if you answer no then the current choice is only temporary)
- \* you can only sort the main database on one field at a time.
- \* the program is copy protected and there is a hidden charge of \$10.00 for a backup copy.

Strong points:

- \* the program comes with ram disks ranging from 100k to 600k so you can fit really large files into a ram disk.
- \* with a file on a ram disk and searching through an indexed field or multiple fields record selection is functionally instantaneous.
- \* files can have unlimited numbers of subfiles. These subfiles can be sorted on any number of fields (the first field sorted has the lowest priority the last field sorted has the highest priority). (But you must do the sorts one at a time - click the mouse at the field, select the sort subrange (file) menu with a click, select the sort option from the dialog box, watch the little clock 'fill' until the job is done. On the other hand a 200 to 300 record sub file sorts in about 15 seconds including mousing around!)
- \* you can have up to four files open at the same time and effortlessly transport records between them using what Datatrieve calls sequential records (better be sure the databases are set for the same number of fields!!)
- \* a paper form can be literally duplicated on the screen.
- \* the user interface of this program is exceptionally easy. We have had dozens of parents come over for a couple of hours each to help type in information. The tutorial is a one record demo followed by two or so records of supervised instruction. The menus, icons, and red stickers on three function keys really make this a program a snap to learn. Within fifteen minutes of sitting down with the program for the first time people are able to work quickly and independently (NOTE: the biggest problem for an adult is coordinating mouse movement to arrow movement on the screen - finally a functional reason for adults to play arcade style
- \* most important - this program does not bomb out. When I've done something stupid a dialog box pops up to tell me so. When the program hits a TOS error

a cryptic TOS error box appears and with a press return you regain control of the computer so you can save your file(s) back to disk and then try to figure out what went wrong.

Summary:

Datatrieve is a highly proficient database program. It is basically an index card type database but has immense size (number of fields, number of records) capabilities, extraordinary screen, report, list, and label capabilities, an ingenious interface between the computer and user offering the choice of icons,

drop down menus, or keystrokes for most operations. In short it is the most useful ST program I have yet encountered.

Datatrieve by Abacus Software has a suggested retail price \$49.95 (plus \$10.00 extra for a backup copy of the program). It is available mail order for around \$35.00.

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ST-Report is Edited and Published by Ron Kovacs.

Assistants are:

Susan Perry, Ken Kirchner, Rich Decowski. Some article appearing in this publication are original text. You can reprint any article from this issue unless otherwise noted. Please be sure to include ST-Report as the source if you reprint any article.

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Part Two--

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#### THE GENIE ATARI ST ROUNDTABLE - AN OVERVIEW

The Roundtable is an area of GENie specifically set aside for owners and users of Atari ST computers, although all are welcome to participate.

There are three main sections to the Roundtable: the Bulletin Board, the Software Library and the Real Time Conference area.

The Bulletin Board contains messages from Roundtable members on a variety of Topics, organized under several Categories. These messages are all open and available for all to read (GENie Mail should be used for private messages). If you have a question, comment, hot rumor or an answer to someone else's question, the Bulletin Board is the place to share it.

The Software Library is where we keep the Public Domain software files that are available to all Roundtable members. You can 'download' any of these files into your own computer by using a Terminal Program which uses the 'XMODEM' file-transfer method. You can also share your favorite Public Domain programs and files with other Roundtable members by 'uploading' them to the Software Library. Uploading on GENie is FREE, so you are encouraged to participate and help your Roundtable grow.

The Real Time Conference is an area where two or more Roundtable members may get together and 'talk' in 'real-time'. You can participate in organized conferences with special guests, drop in on our weekly Open Conference, or

simply join in on an impromptu chat session. Unlike posting messages or Mail for other members to read at some later time, everyone in the Conference area can see what you type immediately, and can respond to you right away, in an 'electronic conversation'.

Below is the Main Roundtable Menu, with these areas indicated:

GENie ST Page 475

Atari ST RoundTable  
Library: ALL Libraries

1. Atari ST Bulletin Board	<-- Messages
2. Atari ST Real-Time Conference	<-- Electronic Conversations
3. Atari ST RT Libraries	<-- Software Library (Programs)
4. About the Roundtable	
5. Roundtable News	870729

Enter #, <P>revious, or <H>elp?

GENie uses 'Page Numbers' to indicate the menus for the different Roundtables on the system. In this case, the Atari ST Roundtable is Page 475.

Menu selection #4, 'About the Roundtable' will contain information about the purpose of the Roundtable, and the system operators, or SysOps. Choices #5 will contain bulletins and information. You may want to Capture these and print them out for reference.

At the menu prompt, you can type P to return to the previous Menu (in this case, the GENie Atari Roundtables Menu), or H for more Help, or simply type the number of your choice from the menu.

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#### VIP PROFESSIONAL UPDATE

Normally, VIP Professional will not print any character having an ASCII value over \$7F. So, for French Canadian like me which use a lot of accented characters, we need to have the VIP Professional able to print these special characters. Even with the use of a Keyboard Set Up Program, which make us able to print at the screen any characters with a single keystroke, the VIP Professional will replace them with a space when we print the spreadsheet.

After looking at the VIP Professional code with a Monitor Program written by my friend Alain Birtz, I found the Hex string code which takes any byte over \$7F and changes it for a space (\$20). The first part of the code is <0C6E 0080 0008> which means <CMPI.W #\$80, \$8(A6)>. After that, VIP Prof. will branch to a sub-routine if the comparison is equal or higher. The sub-routine will then replace the byte with \$20. This explains why VIP Professional print a space instead of a special character.

Now, in order to have the VIP Professional print any special character, we have only to change the byte \$80 in the Hex string code for \$FE. I do not change for \$FF because I do not need the character \$FF and I was afraid to use it. Maybe

the VIP Professional need it??

The change will make your VIP Professional able to print any special character:

French accented characters, German characters, Spanish..., if your printer will accept them. If your printer does not accept directly them, like most daisy wheel printers, you will have to "print" on disk, then retrieve your file with a word processor like First Word which has a printer driver.

In order to make the change, I suggest you to use any Sector Editor prg like <DISK DOCTOR> and search for the Hex string <0C6E0080>. When the string will be located, change the byte \$80 for \$FE, then save. Work on a BACK-UP, to avoid problem... I have use a modified VIP Professional since many months without any problem.

One fun thing has happen when testing the modified version, and this is valuable even for people who will not need the special characters. With the proposed modification, you will be able to catch the user attention when using the </XL> or the </XN> macros. The trick is to write at the end of your message any special character. The special character will not be displayed but the VIP Professional program will <BEEP> like when an error occurs. But this will not affect your program, only a beep sound to catch the user attention.

Any feedback will be appreciated.

Raoul Charbonneau  
3425 Des Cedres St  
ST-Hyacinthe  
PQ, Canada, J2T 4E8  
User ID Number 73637, 431

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ZMAG ATARI NEWS UPDATE ..From CIS Online Today/AP

August 24, ATARI CORP. wants to buy the Federated Group Inc.'s 65-store retail electronics chain for \$67.3 million. By this Friday, it will tender an offer for the 10.7 million outstanding shares of Federated stock, seeking to gain control of stores in California, Arizona, Texas and Kansas.

According to The Associated Press, Federated's seven-member board unanimously approved the \$6.25-a-share offer, noting the firm "has had trouble finding retailers for its products. Among other things, the merger hinges on the approval of Federated's lenders."

Federated lost \$895,000 in the first quarter ended May 31, compared with a profit of \$662,000 for the same period last year, the wire service says. Sales rose 2 percent to \$91.1 million.

Atari's own financial picture has improved lately. In the latest quarter, its profits were up 39.3 percent to \$13.54 million, while revenue rose 16.4 percent to \$70.69 million.

August 25, ATARI's move this week to acquire a retail electronics chain is not an isolated event. "If other transactions come along that fit into our business

plans, we'll do additional acquisitions," says Atari treasurer Steve Kawalick.

Atari Corp. wants to buy the Southern California-based Federated Group Inc.'s 67-store chain for \$67.3 million, a move that would give it control of stores in California, Arizona, Texas, Kansas and New Mexico.

The Associated Press reports that the deal, which is subject to approval by a five-bank consortium that has extended Federated a \$48 million line of credit, was worked out with Federated founder/chief executive Wilfred Schwartz, who will continue to run Atari's Federated subsidiary.

Schwartz told AP, "It's a marriage made in heaven. We felt we wanted to augment our resources with the human and financial resources available through a union with an extremely strong winner."

The wire service notes, "Most of Federated's stores cover half an acre and boast a vast selection of electronic specialty merchandise, including Atari's bottom-line personal computers."

Atari's Kawalick comments, "This particular acquisition gives us additional distribution channels in certain parts of the country."

August 28, Atari Corp. Chairman Jack Tramiel says his firm's acquisition of the 67-store Federated Group electronics store chain will be a mighty tool against Japanese competitors.

Tramiel told The Associated Press, "Our Japanese counterparts all have their own stores in Japan. I like to copy success."

He also said that there are "no consumer electronics companies today in the United States. We need to rebuild that and I think we can do it."

Atari revealed Monday that it is acquiring Federated, which has stores in five Western states, for \$67.3 million. AP quotes Tramiel as saying that Federated was bought in order to reduce the time it takes for products to be accepted by dealers. And "the move will also spread research and development costs over a larger organization," the wire service said.

Federated has lost money recently to the tune of \$5.2 million in the fiscal year ending last February, but Tramiel says it will start making a profit now "by slowing its recent expansion drive and gaining from more advertising and the addition of new Atari products," AP reports. --Charles Bowen;Online Today

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#### COMPUSERVE ATARI8/16 BULLETIN

Don't forget that Monday night at 9:00 PM Eastern time, we will be continuing our series of ST Emulator COs in ATARI16. Our guest this time will be Darek Mihocka. Darek is the author of the latest ST Emulator, ST-Transformer. It emulates the 8-bit Atari 800. The emulator will be released to the Public Domain in ST-Log (from Analog). All SIG\*Atari members, and other interested parties are invited to attend.

[Ed. As many of our readers here might know, ZMAGAZINE and MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE's John Nagy, interviewed Darek a few months ago. At that time he was getting resistance from Atari, Neil Harris, and others on his usage of the 800 OS ROM. Well we are happy to see what has transpired to date. We will be at the conference and we hope you will be there too!]

Please join us in welcoming Keith Ledbetter back to the staff of the ATARI 8-Bit Forum. Keith needs little introduction to the Atari community, having written some of the best and most popular programs available for the Atari 8-bit computers as well as being an active member of SIG\*ATARI.

Keith will be available to help you with his programs, your Atari computer, and CompuServe. SYSOP\*Keith Ledbetter's new PPN is 76701,124. Feel free to drop him a line in the Forum!

WEEKLY CONFERENCE: Every Sunday night at 9:00 PM EDT/6:00 PM PDT. Please join us!

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ST MAGAZINES PART 3 Copyright (C) 1987 by Garry Jones.

ST Business is a new magazine for the Atari ST, appearing bimonthly and featuring articles related to business computing.

Subscriptions are \$25 a year, available through Don and Carole Terp (the editors and publishers), 5140 Appletree Drive, Roanoke VA 24019 - phone (703)342-9599.

The magazine is quite appealing visually, with a full color photograph on the cover and typeset text inside. The design of the body of the magazine is simple and clean, with occasional use of halftoned photographs and color highlighting of text, and the entire magazine is printed on chrome coat stock. Overall, the production quality of the magazine is first class.

As befits a magazine with the word "business" in its' title, the focus of the editorial content is on business. In the December '86/January '87 issue, there

are feature articles on Atari's stock offering, their plans for selling to the Fortune 1000, Comdex Fall '86, the San Jose Atarifest, and a brief description of the forthcoming MegaST's.

There is also a review of Abacus Datatrieve, an article on uninterruptible power supplies, and a report on Atari user group activities, as well as several articles on business management, such as owning a small business, managing personnel, and handling credit accounts.

Right now, ST Business is still developing. It is well produced and well printed, but as a magazine devoted to the use of Atari ST computers in business, the magazine needs to provide more coverage of the ST's business applications. ST Business has, in time, the potential to fill a need for information for the business user of the ST the other Atari magazines are ignoring, but currently, it is still a bit light in that area.

-Garry Jones- Compuserve: 72030,273 Genie: GXRAY

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ZMAG SPECIAL REPORT ...By Lennart Olsson...

European Corporate Electronic Publishing Exhibition, June 10-12

Introduction

June 10-12 there was an electronic publishing exhibition in Frankfurt am Main in Germany. All three days there was also a conference going on in parallel.

The first conference day was dedicated to desktop publishing, the second to workstation publishing, and the third to mainframe publishing. I will try to give Zmag readers a short summary of what was said and shown during the first day.

Well known companies expressed their views on electronic publishing. Some of the more well known companies were:

- Rank Xerox (copiers etc)
- Aldus Corporation (PageMaker)
- Adobe Systems (PostScript)
- Interleaf Inc. (EP workstation s/w)
- Bitstream Inc. (fonts manufacturer)
- Digital Equipment Corp. (DEC)
- Intergraph Corp. (CAD systems)
- IBM (no explanation...)
- Apple Computer Inc. (Macintosh)
- Messerschmidt-Boelkow-Bluhm (aircraft)
- Volvo (excellent Swedish cars...)

Some really famous people attended the exhibition and conference:

- Paul Brainerd, president Aldus Corp.
- John Warnock, president Adobe Systems
- John Sculley, president Apple Computer Inc

#### Day 1: Desktop Publishing Systems

The first day was dominated by Macintosh ideas, software, use, etc. It was said that Macintosh systems held about 80% of the DTP market.

Rank Xerox Ltd.

Roland Magnin - Managing Director & CEO of Rank Xerox Limited in UK - said that paper should be used only for distributing information, not for storing it. There is a huge demand for cunning storage systems, and Xerox is working on it.

The use of artificial intelligence systems will aid the user in finding the requested information to prevent "information overload". Consider a complex technical manual where phrases describing items must be correct. If a phrase describing an item must be changed within a whole hierarchy of documents these systems really would save some valuable user time. Artificial intelligence systems can also be used for customizing complex manuals.

Xerox is also working on intelligent character recognition readers which will recognize the most common fonts and formats, including proportionally spaced fonts. Mr Magnin stated that automatic character reading is approximately 40 times faster than manual input.

There is still a long way to go to be able to scan ANY page including high quality color pictures in combination with reading the text properly. HUGE amounts of memory will be consumed. To accomplish the process reasonably fast Xerox is investigating the use of optical fibre technology. Mr Magnin said that a bandwidth of 100-200 megabits per second was required.

The Future of PageMaker

Paul Brainerd - president of Aldus Corp.- presented his company's best seller PageMaker. For those of you who don't know PageMaker, it is the most sold page make-up software. The marketing support is very professional with video aided courses, training pamphlets, example pamphlets etc.

Mr Brainerd proudly stated that it was he who coined the "desktop publishing" buzz word.

Aldus is now concentrating on developing its PageMaker to support work group publishing and better image processing - including color. PageMaker will in the future take better advantage of local area networks and exist in versions on: the Mac family, IBM PC family, HP, Wang, DEC VAX, and IBM mainframes.

#### The Future of PostScript

John Warnock - president of Adobe Systems (the company which developed PostScript)- hinted that PostScript will soon be an ANSI standard printer control language without too many modifications.

Mr Warnock stated that the best programmers work with PCs now, not with high-end workstations and mainframes.

Adobes efforts is now concentrated on: adapting PostScript better to network use, E-mail, color printing, and non-roman alphabets.

The reason why the PostScript license is so expensive is that many professionally designed fonts are included such as all fonts developed by Bitstream and Lettraset. PostScript will support color separation in the end of 1987 making it possible to print color masks on a laser printer. Full color laser printer support will come later on.

The key note for PostScript is device independence, i.e. any PostScript file should be able to print on any PostScript printer. The maximum resolution supported by PostScript today is 2540 dpi. Today there are 125 PostScript fonts available. Mr Warnock predicted there should be about 600 fonts available next year.

#### Software Trends

Michael von Babo - Software Trends Newsletter (Switzerland) - presented some interesting desktop publishing thoughts.

1. Desktop publishing suits nearly all types of documents.
2. Currently Macintoshes are best suited for interactive use, while IBM PCs are best suited for automatic batch processing.
3. 80% of all desktop publishing users find PageMaker (and other page make-up s/w) incomplete missing for example style sheets. Style sheets are used when for example defining the format of a certain type of paragraph.
4. Desk accessories are invaluable. There are desk accessories (on the Mac) for picture libraries, text processing, document conversion between certain formats etc.

5. Word 3.0 is the leading word processor at the moment.
6. PostScript is worth the money - scanning is not. The ability to send PostScript files to many types of printing equipment is very good. Draft copies can be printed on a laser printer, and originals on phototype setters. Scanned images can currently not be handled sufficiently in the PC world.
7. Screens must be large and with sharp contrast. Primary memory should not be less than 1 Mbyte. Secondary memory (hard disk) should be at least 20 Mbyte, but not more than 40 Mbyte for a single PC.
8. Desktop publishing can take advantage of software developed for other uses. Documents can be planned in outline processors, charts drawn using spreadsheets, etc.
9. Desktop publishing leads to desktop communications, i.e. common templates, E-mail, tele publishing, etc.
10. Total control over a publication for one single user means that the user is himself responsible for proofreading etc.

#### DTP Technical Illustrations

Reinhard Soernsen - RELOG GmbH in Kiel, W Germany - presented some FANTASTIC technical illustrations made with MacPaint, MacDraw, and MacDraft. After his presentation he was surrounded by a large crowd asking how RELOG had managed to do those extremely detailed and crisp pictures. Mr Soernsen said that the few limitations RELOG had experienced in MacPaint, MacDraw, and MacDraft was now solved by a new illustration program from Adobe systems - ADOBE ILLUSTRATOR.

RELOG had experienced that the Macintosh software suited their needs. No other computer could presently run the type of software RELOG required. Presently they used Macintosh Pluses and Macintosh SEs. Macintosh IIs should replace the old machines as soon as they became available. RELOG felt that the currently small screen and keyboard was a real pain.

#### Apple's Gala Dinner

At Tuesday evening Apple Computer had invited all conference delegates to a gala dinner. We saw the complete Macintosh family on display and could also test some features. I was personally most interested in the color Mac II. An Apple representative told me that they had grabbed the wrong video display card in their offices and could therefore only display 16 colors maximum instead of the 256 I had expected. A real disappointment!

Apple Computer Inc. president and CEO John Sculley spoke about the future of desktop publishing and Apple's role in it.

Mr Sculley was very pleased that IBM finally had jumped on the graphics user interface train. Now he didn't have to explain why IBM - as the worlds leading computer manufacturer - hadn't adopted a graphics user interface if it really was as good as Sculley said.

Apple intends to keep the three year lead on IBM in this niche. Mr Sculley

expected IBM to be up to Macintosh standards in about three years. Meanwhile Apple intended to further develop its software concepts, now when they have opened up the hardware for third party developers. Improved networking, work groups, standardized interfaces, etc were things of great interest.

#### Summing Up

It will be interesting to see what Atari Corp. will offer in an attempt to match the others. I think Atari can satisfy the home, club, and small business users. However, there is a very long way for Atari to go in order to satisfy larger professional Desktop/Electronic Publishing users.

The other two days were not nearly as interesting, at least not for Zmag readers I think. Tell Ron Kovacs if you think I'm wrong. In that case I may submit a summary of the other two days too. Here follows some topics covered during those two days:

#### Day 2: Electronic Publishing Workstations

- \* Quality Typography - Mike Parker, Founder Bitstream Inc.
- \* Integrated EP Systems - Howard Woolf, DEC
- \* CAD In Electronic Publishing - Mike Cunningham, Intergraph Corp.
- \* Standards for Document and Data Encoding - Peter Howgate, The Pindar Group UK

#### Day 3: Dedicated and Mainframe Electronic Publishing Systems

- \* The IBM Commitment - IBM Germany
- \* Dedicated EP Systems at Messerschmidt - Boelkow-Bluhm
- \* Future Color Publishing - James D. Salmon, Crossfield Electronics Ltd.
- \* IBM Mainframe Publishing - Hans Lackeus, AB Volvo Data

I can be reached on CIS (76254,467) or BIX (lolsson) if you want to discuss something in particular.

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YOUR ST COMES ALIVE!!! by Richard Leinecker Computer Spectrum Inc.

Droughts are amazing and yet painful things. A desert can go for years in some cases without water and all for miles around will be dry and parched. Then when

the rains do finally make their appearance it seems it will never stop and there are minor floods and washouts. I am using this analogy in reference to the seeming drought of hardware project related publications for the Atari line

of computers. We have a good variety of manuals on programming, creation of games, how-to-play, and almost any conceivable topic under the sun, EXCEPT hardware construction publications!

I am pleased to announce that with the advent of "Your ST Comes Alive", and its companion "The Scientific ST", the water shortage has ended!

After we read through some fundamentals of kit building, parts value determination, basic logic gates and integrated circuit rudiments and a brief 'expose' of the binary number system, we dive into a fascinating world where you can control many facets of your surroundings right from your Atari ST keyboard!

Along with four chapters that cover simple projects that enable you to build experiments to interface with your parallel port, cartridge port, midi interface and joystick/mouse port, you are briefed on how to write basic routines that will read data to and from these various ports of your Atari ST. The programs included that run these projects are well written, but are at the

same time admittedly "bare bones" and therefore will allow you to enhance, configure and structure these useful routines to your own computing needs and personal preferences.

Upon examination of the enclosed single sided 3 1/2 disk you will find a multitude of programs written to be used with the projects described in the book. One very important factor a potential possessor of this product should not overlook is that all the programs contained on the disk are written both in

"C" and in basic so users can readily adapt these routines to their needs whether they prefer the "easily computer transportable" versatility of "C", or they use such excellent Basic languages as GFA and DTack.

As we delve further into this manual we then are pleasantly surprised as we discover a chapter which covers information you need to construct the necessary hardware to control several modems at the same time. I see numerous SYSOPs perking up at this one!

And then if you should possibly have some free time as your multi-user bbs hums along, why then you could construct a nice networking setup to handle data for a large business or a small users group! While away on vacation, which you have earned from your hard-working ST equipment, you determine that you really should wash the dishes, and check your answering machine for messages. Believe it or not, you will learn how these very things are done by constructing a device found herein that will answer the phone and then proceed to respond to different push buttons which have been depressed by the caller.

We also will uncover the mysteries of "event detectors" such as door alarms, light detectors, infrared light receivers, touch switches, and even use these principles to build a device which will judge distance! And although in this manual alone there are enough experiments to keep the average project fanatic happy for months to come...we aren't done yet!

In order to be able to communicate and control a wide variety of devices via your Atari ST you are also instructed in the fundamentals and construction of data encoders and decoders. You also are enlightened on how to whip up Analog To Digital convertors, data selectors, a speech synthesizer and a very good light pen! Now tell me this isn't the best bargain you have seen yet for your Atari ST computer system! The price? At a mere \$29.95 for this book/disc combination I have a sneaking suspicion they will go through several printings of this one!

At the end of the book is a listing of firms you can purchase the parts used in these projects from, and also several pc board etching firms if you care to pursue building these kits after this fashion. Oh yes, at Midtown we do carry a special adapter that allows you to use standard spacing 44 perfboard instead of that very expensive and hard to find cartridge board that you normally have to

sweat it out with. This \$19.95 gem simply plugs into your cartridge port and the perfboard plugs into it, and is reusable.

Exciting isn't it? Now get those solder stations fired up and lets get on with some REAL fun!

-Mr. Goodprobe-  
c/o Midtown TV  
27 Midway Plaza  
Tallmadge, Ohio 44278  
(216)633-0997

Please send your hardware mods/fixes/upgrades/questions for the Atari 8 and 16 bit lines for inclusion in future issues of Zmag to the above address!

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PCP PURSUIT--MORE FOR FREE ???

Recently there has been an influx of information regarding PC Pursuit that has finally reached the Atari user. I wish to correct one common misconception I have seen time and time again on bulletin boards across this fine land of ours regarding this service, and then proceed to demonstrate how you can expand the areas PC Pursuit presently covers legally and at absolutely NO extra cost!

Numerous messages I have seen, and even some out-dated text files which contain information on the money saving network called PC Pursuit lead the user to believe that there is in effect, a one hour time limit on phone calls made to the area code of your choice. This is at present absolutely inaccurate, for the only real time limit one has on this phenomenal service is the hours which are from 6p-7a on the weekdays, and 24 hours on Saturday, Sunday and several holidays.

I, as well as many other Atari/PCPursuit users can attest we enjoy on the weekend seeing our timers that inform us of the length of our modem visits roll over the 10 hour mark...imagine if we were using a normal long distance service! And quite honestly, when you stop to think about it, the fact that the charge for this service is only \$25 a month means that the young "hackers" that persist in using illegal codes and the like are not only committing a crime, but also lacking sense as this is a very small charge to be legal and avoid the severe penalties they could and will receive if they are ever caught. I would urge them to consider the MANY benefits of PC Pursuit, and they may in turn be surprised at how easy it is to convince their parents of the assets of belonging to such a network!!!

Now, how a modem user can ever wear out 25 jam packed area codes I will never know, but how would you like to be able to add 3 more heavily populated area codes to your bulging list! Does the thought of 50 more Atari 8 and 16 bit bulletin boards tickle your fancy?

Heres the scoop:

1. While in the 212 area code (NYC), you can access the 718 area code, which is

right next door by dialing as follows:

```
ATZ<cr>
<control-e><cr>
```

At the HELLO, I'M READY prompt type:

```
D<cr>
At the NUMBER? prompt type: 1 718 numbers
```

If you are fortunate the bulletin board you are calling will not be busy and you will connect as usual. The reason you and I can do this is because of the vast amount of people living in the New York City vicinity, the phone company decided to break it into separate area codes to help with billing procedures. Not all 718 area code numbers are available through this method, but a very large portion are and stand awaiting your call!

Another fine area code is the Washington, D.C area code which is 202. Another quirk allows you to be able to dial the 301 (Maryland) and 703 (Northern Virginia) areas from this access port. You need to do nothing differently than you are presently accustomed to in order to be able to dial the 301 and 703 area codes while connected to the 202 area code. Merely dial the BBS number of your choice as if you were calling the 202 area code itself, and many more fine bulletin boards will unfold before your awaiting eyes!

And please, while you are on these systems, make it your practice to leave a message or two to help promote healthy discussions which are so vital to the thriving and in fact survival of these fine computer bulletin board systems!

Enjoy! And don't stay up to late calling all these new boards!

-Mr. Goodprobe-

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GARBAGE ON THE LINE BY: CALAMITY JANE

[Ed. This week CJ sent it this article, Humor by Scott Andersen...]

At first it was just rumors. I'm sure you've heard some of them. Mergers and/or joint ventures. Atari and AT&T. Atari and Teledyne. Atari and whomever. But this one is confirmed. I saw the proof at last months outdoors exposition.

Atari is involved in a joint venture with Coleman Western, the outdoor products giant. The offspring of this marriage is the Coleman Camp Computer, hereafter known as the CCC.

It was on display in one corner of the Coleman booth at the outdoor show, with an Atari rep in attendance to demo the machine. It is quite a machine. Its most impressive feature is its ability to function without a power supply; the CCC uses white gas (Coleman Fuel) like so many other Coleman appliances. After filling the tank with fuel and pressurizing the system by hand pumping, you start up by firing the pilot/burner. The gas flame heats a sealed fluid system which powers a micro turbine generator. This in conjunction with a regulator provides all the voltage you need to power the CCC and all of its peripherals. The CCC is a 128K machine that utilizes the 6502 processor.

It has a new O.S. that is completely compatible with all Atari and third party software. Two built-in languages are switched on or off via a three way rocker switch, they are Basic (of course) and Action. Atari apparently had a large quantity of 400 keyboards that they decided to use up on the CCC. While being a

pain to type on, the use of the membrane keyboard is understandable on a product that can be left out in the rain. Yes, the CCC is completely weatherproof. Rubber doors cover the 4 joystick ports, the I/O port, the serial/expansion bus, and the built-in disk drive and modem. The disk drive is a half height 5-1/4" that uses single or enhanced density. The modem is something completely different. It is said to be almost Hayes compatible, the exception being that it can't answer. This is understandable, you have no phone

number. At the end of the 25 foot modem cable is a special induction device that you merely clamp over any phone cable. No pins, no plugs, no muss, no fuss. The device can only originate calls, but it can do it anywhere there is a telephone line, be it the backwoods or your back yard.

All this and 1200 Baud too. When you lift the cover on the CCC you'll see the best feature of all. The 9" Hi-Res LCD color monitor has a true 80 column screen that is compatible with most available software. If not, a rubber toggle switch will get you back to 40 column at any time. In either mode the characters are sharp and crisp and easy to read. All this and only 14.4 pounds.

But if that seems too heavy for you backpackers, the fuel tank/pump/burner/stand assembly can be detached.

The remaining unit, at 8.3 pounds, can be used at any campsite simply by setting it on the campfire. Included in the \$450 price are three new pieces of software.

The first, "Campcalc", is a wilderness management program. The second, "Camp-Talk", synthesizes bird and animal calls. The third is a graphics masterpiece. It is a Conestoga Wagon simulator called "Yerass". No more boring evenings around the campfire.

#### Coleman Camping Computer Update

Yes, since announced in the June 1986 issue of Mile High Magazine, Coleman products, has barely been able to keep up with the orders for the Coleman Camping Computer, let alone develop any new enhancements for the popular system. Due to some heat disipation problems, the Camp Fire power system, has been dropped, in favor of a new system using 3 6foot solar panels, generating enough heat to move a small turbin, which in turn is hooked to a generator.

This seems to be a much safer system, then the camp fire unit, and is ready to ship as of this writing. Estimated cost is a reasonable \$1250 plus shipping. Shipping due to size, must be arranged by the purchaser, with local contacts for hauling, setup and crane services. Estimated weight is 2200 pounds.

#### Third Party Support!

Yes, with a great product like the CCC, there is undoubtedly going to be some inovative third party support. DuckPuck Direct, Wholesalers for Idaho has jumped on the CCC bandwagon with a couple of new products. Their feature product is a small nuclear power supply, much smaller in size and weight then Colemans Solar system. This amazing power source will be very popular with the "way back in" campers. True, a waste water source of 200 cubic feet per minute

is necessary to prevent core meltdown. And true, plutonium is some what of a rare item, (though DuckPuck has plutonium available in their new catalog, and is rumored to be working on a reactor that will be fueled by, what else 'DuckPuck').

Side advantages of the Alternate power source is that you can recover some of the cost of the plutonium by selling the additional unused mega-watts to the local power company. The large amount of heat generated is a definite plus, for the Artic Campers. Included is your very own lead lined camping attire, sleeping bag, and water purification system to assure that you are not contamined by the waste. ALL in ALL an exciting package for the CCC.

DuckPuck has also announced some other enhancements for the Coleman system. These include: For the Camp Talk Synthesis System.

Domestic Animal Data Disk! Wouldn't Old McDonald be envious. For those of you that live on a farm and would like to have exciting conversations with your horses, cows, pigs and chickens. Requires version 26 of ODS (Out Door Operating system.)

Exotic Bird Data Disk. Another fine data disk for the Camp Talk Module, This is for those of you planing a trip down the Amazon and would like to keep in touch with the local wildlife. Another useful product from DuckPuck.

Also distributed by the amazing DuckPuck Folks is Apuck74! Those of you familar with the popular Amodem 74 by our own Trent Dudley, will feel right at home with Apuck74. As usual Mr. Dudley did a fine job of porting the powerful program over to ODS. One nice enhancement added to this version is optional core temp monitoring with the DuckPuck Nuclear power system.

Rumor has it that DuckPuck is working on a Code name 'P' power enhancement for the Backpacking users. An Inside informer, claims the P stands for potatoe, and is the main component used in the new device.

For more Information on these, and other outstanding CCC products contact:

DuckPuck Direct  
The Software Wholesalers for Idaho  
P.U. Box 3 Duckpuck  
Idaho

Thanks to The Puget Sound Atari Users for Inspiration in creating this article.

Scott Anderson is the current President of STARFLEET Atari User Group of Denver, Colorado. This was first printed in the MILE HIGH Atari Magazine and I down loaded it from SKYLINE BBS. <Both of Denver>

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---CJ--- (Calamity Jane)

of the article.

Taken from ST-REPORT #6, Publication of Zmagazine (c)1987

Thanks for reading and supporting ST-Report. Next issue: 9/12/87

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